

The LAY-MONK.

*Claustra pandite Januae,
Virgo adept.*

Catull.

Sed non ego credulus illis.

Virg.

From WEDNESDAY, January 20. to FRIDAY, January 22. 1713.

THE two following Letters relating to my Province, I am directed to publish them. They come from two ingenious Females, who have done me the Honour to singe me out for their Correspondent. As to the first, I foresee Busines increasing upon my Hands; and if I receive any more Applications of that Nature, I shall move the Sisterhood, to appoint me by their Warrant Master of the Ceremonies, for the introducing of Probationers to the Lay-Nunnery.

E. FREEMAN.

Mr. FREEMAN, Cambridge, Jan. 9. 1714.

THE Politeness and good Manners with which you answer'd the Letter of your fair Oxonian Correspondent, has encourag'd me to make my Case known to you, which is not much unlike hers.

My Fortune is but small, but I am told I have both Wit and Beauty, and I can't help believing it: I have a Crowd of Admirers, but the same Fate with Mrs. Silverscarf, never yet to have been ask'd the Question. This is a more sincere Confession than most of our Sex in my Case would have been guilty of; who would rather have made a Virtue of Necessity, and pretended to have refus'd what had never been offer'd. But the whole Town will witness for me, that my pious and honest Endeavours towards the Con-

jugal State have not been wanting; not a Lure, not an attractive Ornament have I omitted; nay, I have been sometimes accus'd of hanging out false Colours, yet all to no Purpose. I have Admirers of all Degrees, who pretend to have a great Passion for me; but when I suggest lasting and honourable Terms, they profess they love me too well ever to consent to them. Strange! that a Woman should be reduc'd to wish the Indifferency of her Lovers!

To tell you the Truth, I am now upon the Decline of my Beauty, and Time passes away very fast. The Doctors of this Place date my Prime from their Admission; and the Junior Beauties insultingly say, Sure she must use Art, or she could not wear so well.

These Mortifications are too great for the Spirit of a Woman to bear, and I'll never be a Subject where I have reign'd a Monarch: 'Tis now high Time to abdicate, so I desire your Interest, which I dare say is not small, with the fair Members of the Lay-Nunnery, that I may be admitted into their agreeable Society. My Admirers shall see that

Love has Wings, and will away.

I am

Your most Affectionate Lay-Sister,

AMORET.

P. S. I shall not refuse to admit you to my Tea-Table now and then.

Dear

(Price Three Half-pence.)

To Mr Freeman.

XXXVII

Dear Mr. FREEMAN,

« *Quis non invenit turba quod amaret in illa?* You will be surpriz'd, I suppose, to see Latin writ in the Scrawl of a Woman's Hand; but to shew you that I can translate it too, (as well as some French Ladies) I mean, That your Fraternity, like their Writings, are adapted to every Humour, the Grave, the Frolick and the Gay: No Temper, Age or Sex but may reap Benefit from the Productions of the Lay-Monks. But tho' I profess this Opinion of you in the general, *trahit sua quemque voluptas*, I own a more particular Esteem for your self. This Fondness, when I read your Papers, inspires me to think all you say has a pleasing Turn, and an Air of Politeness; tho' perhaps it may partly proceed from Gratitude, and from observing the great Respect you pay to our Sex.

« And will you then, Mr. FREEMAN, exclude your self from us? What! Not so much as a young Girl come to you from your Milliners? 'Tis very hard. You serv'd the Brotherhood right when you made an Excursion to the Lay-Nuns.

« Your Answer to the Lady's Letter from Oxford I thought very pretty; and now I mention Letters, it puts me in mind of Three or Four I lately receiv'd from a Gentleman, without a Name; but being tir'd with a Correspondence (if I may call it so) which was only on his Side, I never made any Return, but that of one of his own Letters unopen'd. By the by, the shortest I have might be cut out into half a Dozen *Billers Doux*. Pray tell how he bears this Indignity: I have now before me two or three Lines which he sent by the Penny-Post directed with another Hand, so that I was betray'd to open it, and there read,

MADAM,

THE Affront offer'd me, in sending back my Letter unopen'd, is infufferable, and drives me to such Despair, that I will not end my Life, but make it more miserable, by complying with my Parents Desire in marrying a Woman, whom I hate to the same Excess that I once lov'd you; and alas! still must I confess that I am your Admirer!

« Is not this provoking now, when I don't know that I ever saw his Face? Well! you Men are strange Creatures. *Heu pietas! heu prisca fides!* *fuit Ilum et ingens gloria-- Oh!* for a Return of those bright halcyon Days.

« But I forget my Character when I write Latin thus, without telling you how I came by it. You must know, therefore, that I am the youngest of four Sisters. Our Mother dy'd, and left us young; but we had an indulgent Father, who took Care to have us well educated,

only in some things which did not fall under his Notice, wanting the Restraint of a Mother, we are a little wild. But what a long Preface is here, to tell you that our Father perfectly understands the Latin, Italian, French and Spanish Tongues, and having no Son, and being willing to propagate in each of his Daughters one of his Languages, he provided us a Tutor, who was a Master of them all. We had each the Liberty of chusing our Language. The Eldest, a merry Girl, who can scarce forbear laughing at Church, chose French; the next, of a haughty Temper, who is always saying to me, *Prithee, what does the Child mean?* pitch'd upon Spanish; the third of a languishing Look, and much addicted to reading Romances, took to Italian. I for my Part had no Choice left, but was very well pleas'd with my Lot, which was Latin. I endeavour to prove to them that 'tis unjust to call that a dead Tongue which is spoken or understood by the better Sort of People thro' the whole World. If the third praise *Tasso*, I extol *Virgil*; when the first praises *Boileau's Lutrin*, I advance the *Aeneid*; and, in short, I tell them, that tho' I'm the youngest, they are grafted on my Stock, and all their Languages are deriv'd from the Roman, as the Kingdoms and States wherein they are spoken, are founded on the Ruins of its wide Empire.

« I'm glad of this Opportunity to tell my Sisters their own; they will never let me speak (tho' when I do, 'tis perhaps with as much Sense as any of them) but they cry, *Peace Prattler*. But suppose they should not see this?

« I am afraid of your sober President Sir EUSTACE, tho' I cannot doubt Mr. FREEMAN's good Nature will make Allowances for my Sex, and not discourage a young female Scribe. And what need is there that Sir EUSTACE should see it? But if he must, pray let it be after t'other Flask; and do you defend it, if any of the Fraternity should criticise, or ask from Aristotle what Design there is in this foolish Letter, or where is the Connexion? But if it will not pass without Amendments, I allow no one to touch it except your self. If you do not put me out of Countenance by slighting this, I will write to you often, and take more Pains in my next. My second Sister talks of sending you a Novel which she has done out of Spanish; as the first will make you a Present of *Moliere's Cocu imaginaire* in English; and the third has been these 4 Months composing an Italian Opera, which she intends to dedicate to Sir EUSTACE. In fine, Mr. FREEMAN, (for my Hand is weary with writing) I would not have you despise the Works of three such scavantes Femmes, as my eldest Sister says they are, for she won't allow me to be one; but I appeal to you, and will only add, that I am *sine dolo* Yours

Ab ovo usque ad mala,

Jan. 12. 1714.

A. F.

LONDON, Printed: And Sold by James Roberts in Warwick-Lane, where Advertisements are taken in, at Three Shillings each.

